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# Household Purchases of Butter, Fluid Whole Milk, and Other Fluid Milk, April 1956



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Agricultural Marketing Service  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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## PREFACE

This series of monthly reports is based on information obtained in a cooperative project financed by the United States Department of Agriculture and by the dairy industry through the American Dairy Association. The Department funds are provided under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (RMA, Title II).

Reports in this series covering the months April 1954 through March 1956 showed estimates of household purchases and related information for butter, cheese, nonfat dry milk solids, and margarine. Starting in April 1956 the coverage was changed to include data on fluid whole milk and fluid skim milk products in addition to butter. The reporting on cheese, nonfat dry milk solids, and margarine was discontinued at that time.

The basic data presented herein were collected by the Market Research Corporation of America from its National Consumer Panel and were tabulated by it, under contract with the Department. The data beginning April 1954 are based on reports from a sample of approximately 5,800 families. Additional data on butter only for the months April 1953-March 1954 are also available. The data prior to April 1954 were based on a sample of about 4,300 families and were statistically adjusted to the level reported from the 5,800-family sample.

The estimates include only purchases for consumption by household consumers and do not reflect volume purchased by hotels, restaurants, hospitals, or other institutions.

This report was prepared in the Market Development Branch of the Marketing Research Division, Agricultural Marketing Service.

HOUSEHOLD PURCHASES OF BUTTER, FLUID WHOLE MILK,  
AND OTHER FLUID MILK, APRIL 1956

The data in this report are estimates of total purchases by household consumers only, and do not include consumption in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, or other institutional outlets. Data for a month are for a 4-week period (28 days) to permit comparisons of purchase volume between periods of equal length.

SUMMARY

Householders reported buying slightly over 65 million pounds of butter during April 1956 as compared with almost 63 million pounds in April 1955. The percentage of families buying butter was about the same as a year earlier, with 45.3 percent of all families making a butter purchase during April 1956 and 45.1 percent during April 1955. But the frequency of and the quantity of butter purchased per buying family in April 1956 were up slightly from a year earlier.

April 1956 was the 25th consecutive month during which United States householders reported larger butter purchases than the corresponding month a year earlier. In the dairy marketing year ending March 31, 1956, purchases of butter for household use were reported at more than 5 percent greater than in the preceding marketing year. During April 1954-March 1955 purchases had been 13 percent above the level reported during April 1953-March 1954.

Consumers in this survey reported paying almost 68 cents per pound for butter in April 1956. This price was somewhat higher than in April of the preceding 2 years but about 8 cents per pound lower than in April 1953 (table 1).

When compared with March 1956, most of the indicators of butter purchases in this report showed a downward movement during April 1956. The seasonal price trend for butter is usually downward in the spring of the year. However, the strengthening of prices from March to April this year was probably associated with a change in the support level for manufacturing milk and butter fat.

Data on household purchases of fluid whole milk and other fluid milk are presented for the first time in this report. Information is presented on purchases and prices for the major fluid categories and within each category by size of container in which purchases were made.

Comparisons on levels of purchases and prices for fluid whole milk and other fluid milk are made between the current months and with the same period two years earlier. The marketing year April 1954-March 1955 was used for comparative purposes because it was the most recent period for which complete data were available for fluid whole and other fluid milk products.

"Fluid whole milk", as carried in this report, includes extra grades and regular grades, homogenized and not homogenized, and fortified and unfortified

fluid whole milk products. "Other fluid milk" includes skim, fortified skim, buttermilk, and flavored milk drinks. Household purchases for any of the components making up the majority categories are not available. Fluid cream and half and half mixtures are not included in these data.

Data in this report are confined to estimates of total purchases of selected dairy products by household consumers. They do not include consumption or purchases for use in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, schools, or other institutions. Furthermore, quantities of these products utilized by industry for various end uses are not included.

Householders reported buying about 1,086 million quarts of fluid whole milk in April 1956. This was about 40 million quarts, or 4 percent, above the purchase level in April 1954. Purchases of fluid skim products for household use were reported at 68 million quarts, about 14 million quarts, or 25 percent, higher than purchases in April 1954 (table 2). The quantity of fluid whole milk bought by householders approximated 94 percent of the total of fluid whole and skim purchases combined during April 1956 as compared with 95 percent in the same month in 1954.

Significant changes from April 1954 to April 1956 were noted in household purchases of fluid whole milk by size of container. Purchases in gallon size containers between the 2 periods increased about 25 percent, half-gallon container purchases were up over 50 percent, while purchases in quart-size containers were down 12 percent.

The distribution of fluid whole milk purchases by size of containers in April 1956 was as follows: gallon size, 6.7 percent; half-gallon size, 29.5 percent; and quart size, 63.7 percent. Household purchases in "other size" containers--pint, one-third and one-half pint--represented less than 1 percent of total consumer purchases of fluid whole milk.

The average price reported paid per quart for fluid whole milk, regardless of size of container, by consumers in this survey was 22.2 cents in April 1956 compared with 21.9 cents in April 1954. This was reflected in higher average prices paid for fluid whole milk for all size containers in April 1956 compared with April two years earlier. The price of whole milk sold in the gallon-size container showed a somewhat larger percentage rise than was reported for milk sold in other size containers. Average prices reported paid in April 1956 for fluid whole milk were 18.1 cents per quart in gallons, 20.9 cents in half-gallons and 23.2 cents per quart in quart-size containers (table 3).

For purchases of fluid skim products during April 1956, compared with April 1954, the most noticeable change was a three-fold increase for fluid skim products sold in half-gallon containers. A small increase, about 11 percent, was reported in purchases of fluid skim in the quart size. The level of purchases of gallon-size containers was about the same in both periods.

During April 1956 household purchases of fluid skim items in quart-size containers accounted for 78 percent of the total purchases of fluid skim products; half-gallons, about 17 percent; and gallons, about 4 percent. Fractional amounts were bought in sizes other than gallon, half-gallon, and quart.

Consumers reported paying slightly lower prices for fluid skim products in gallon and quart-size containers in April 1956 than in April 1954. Average prices paid for skim products sold in half-gallon containers were up about 5 percent. The average price paid for fluid skim products in April 1956 was 11.3 cents per quart in gallon-size containers; 16.5 cents per quart in half-gallon size containers and 19.2 cents in quart-size containers. The average price reported for total purchases of "other fluid milk", regardless of size of container, was 18.5 cents per quart in April 1956 and 18.8 cents in April 1954 (table 4).

About 82 percent of all families made a purchase of fluid milk, including whole and skim, during the 4-week period of April 1956 compared with 83 percent in the same period two years earlier. Slightly over 10 percent of all families reporting in this survey live on farms and many of these families have farm produced milk available for their use. Almost 80 percent of all families bought fluid whole milk during the month of April 1956, while 19 percent bought fluid skim items. This reflects a slight gain from April 1954 in the percentage of families buying fluid skim products as contrasted to a drop in the percentage buying fluid whole milk (table 5).

Household purchases per capita for fluid whole milk and other fluid milk combined during April 1956 were reported at 7.11 quarts, somewhat higher than in the same month for 1954. The increase in the overall per capita rate for fluid products by householders was reflected in a 20-percent gain for skim items and an increase of just over 1 percent for fluid whole milk (table 6).

Table 1.--Butter: Household purchases and average price per pound, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased							
	Total				Per 1,000 population			
	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54
	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Million pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
April.....	65.1	62.7	58.0	56.2	401	388	367	369
May.....		62.2	58.5	54.7		385	371	359
June.....		61.3	54.5	51.9		380	345	340
July.....		57.0	54.2	50.9		356	341	332
August.....		58.7	57.9	53.3		366	364	348
September.....		63.1	60.4	55.1		394	379	360
October.....		66.0	63.2	51.0		409	394	331
November.....		68.0	65.7	54.4		422	410	353
December.....		72.4	69.2	55.5		449	432	361
January.....		66.2	65.3	56.6		411	407	367
February.....		67.2	63.8	53.4		417	398	346
March.....		68.3	64.0	56.3		423	399	365
	Percentage of all families buying				Average price paid per pound			
	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
April.....	45.3	45.1	44.0	44.7	67.7	67.2	66.6	75.4
May.....		45.2	42.8	43.5		66.7	66.0	75.0
June.....		44.6	41.4	42.7		66.5	65.7	74.5
July.....		44.0	42.2	43.3		66.7	65.8	74.5
August.....		45.1	43.3	44.2		66.7	66.0	74.7
September.....		46.1	43.1	45.9		67.4	66.4	74.9
October.....		46.3	45.4	43.7		67.7	68.1	75.3
November.....		47.6	46.2	44.8		67.6	68.2	76.6
December.....		49.0	48.5	44.4		67.8	68.6	76.0
January.....		46.9	45.5	42.8		68.0	68.2	75.6
February.....		46.5	45.6	42.2		67.8	67.7	75.2
March.....		47.2	45.4	44.1		67.5	67.6	72.2

(Continued)

Table 1---Butter: Household purchases and average price per pound, U. S., 4-week periods (continued)

Period	Per buying family							
	Purchases				Quantity per purchase			
	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54	1956-57	1955-56	1954-55	1953-54
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds	Pounds
April.....	2.66	2.64	2.74	2.71	1.11	1.09	1.09	1.06
May.....		2.60	2.80	2.75		1.10	1.10	1.04
June.....		2.60	2.72	2.64		1.09	1.09	1.04
July.....		2.45	2.65	2.58		1.09	1.09	1.04
August.....		2.50	2.81	2.67		1.08	1.08	1.03
September.....		2.58	2.86	2.69		1.09	1.09	1.03
October.....		2.68	2.84	2.59		1.10	1.09	1.02
November.....		2.66	2.88	2.65		1.11	1.09	1.04
December.....		2.70	2.66	2.68		1.13	1.11	1.05
January.....		2.65	2.73	2.90		1.10	1.09	1.04
February.....		2.70	2.65	2.73		1.10	1.10	1.04
March.....		2.68	2.67	2.75		1.11	1.09	1.04

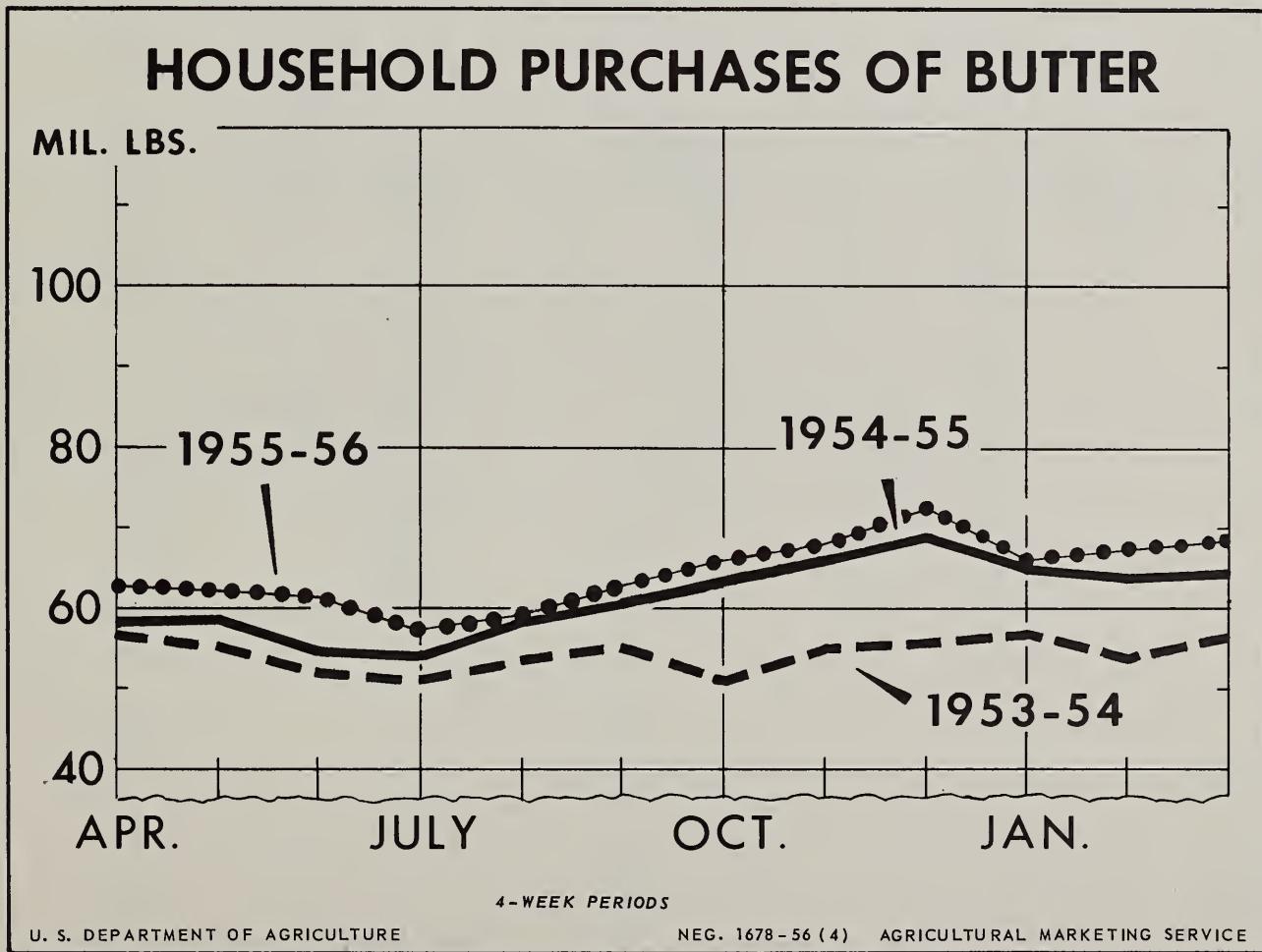


Figure 1

Table 2.--Fluid whole milk and other fluid milk: Total household purchases and average price paid per quart, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased			
	Fluid whole milk		Other fluid milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts
April.....	1,086	1,046	68.2	54.7
May.....		1,064		53.6
June.....		1,034		55.7
July.....		1,003		55.3
August.....		1,021		59.2
September.....		1,082		61.7
October.....		1,112		58.7
November.....		1,117		55.0
December.....		1,119		53.0
January.....		1,125		54.6
February.....		1,121		58.7
March.....		1,116		61.6
.....				
Average price paid per quart equivalent				
	Fluid whole milk		Other fluid milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
April.....	22.2	21.9	18.5	18.8
May.....		21.6		18.5
June.....		21.6		18.4
July.....		21.8		18.6
August.....		22.0		18.7
September.....		22.2		19.2
.....				
October.....		22.3		19.0
November.....		22.4		18.9
December.....		22.4		18.8
.....				
January.....		22.3		18.8
February.....		22.3		18.6
March.....		22.1		18.5
.....				

Table 3.--Fluid whole milk: Household purchases by container size and average price paid, per quart, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased							
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57 Million quarts	1954-55 Million quarts	1956-57 Million quarts	1954-55 Million quarts	1956-57 Million quarts	1954-55 Million quarts	1956-57 Million quarts	1954-55 Million quarts
April.....	691	787	321	202	72.4	57.3	1.5	0.4
May.....		793		208		62.1		0.5
June.....		772		200		60.7		0.3
July.....		745		204		53.7		0.3
August.....		759		208		54.0		0.6
September.....		801		219		61.3		0.6
October.....		816		230		66.2		0.7
November.....		811		242		62.3		0.9
December.....		805		247		66.3		1.0
January.....		800		254		69.2		0.9
February.....		790		256		74.4		0.9
March.....		783		260		70.9		1.2
	Average price paid per quart equivalent							
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57 Cents	1954-55 Cents	1956-57 Cents	1954-55 Cents	1956-57 Cents	1954-55 Cents	1956-57 Cents	1954-55 Cents
April.....	23.2	22.7	20.9	20.4	18.1	17.5	1/	1/
May.....		22.4		19.9		17.0		1/
June.....		22.5		19.5		16.6		1/
July.....		22.7		19.7		16.8		1/
August.....		22.8		20.1		17.2		1/
September.....		23.1		20.4		17.2		1/
October.....		23.2		20.6		17.6		1/
November.....		23.2		20.7		17.8		1/
December.....		23.3		20.5		18.2		1/
January.....		23.2		20.5		17.9		1/
February.....		23.3		20.5		17.9		1/
March.....		23.1		20.3		17.7		1/

1/ Not available.

Table 4.--Other fluid milk: Household purchases by container size and average price paid, per quart, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Quantity purchased							
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts	Million quarts
April.....	53.4	47.9	11.9	4.0	2.7	2.7	0.2	0.1
May.....		47.2		3.8		2.4		.2
June.....		48.7		5.4		1.5		.1
July.....		48.5		4.4		2.3		.1
August.....		50.6		5.5		3.0		.1
September.....		53.3		5.4		2.8		.2
October.....		51.4		4.8		2.2		.3
November.....		48.9		4.4		1.7		.1
December.....		46.4		4.7		1.7		.2
January.....		46.0		6.5		2.0		.1
February.....		50.2		6.4		1.9		.2
March.....		52.4		7.3		1.7		.2
Average price paid per quart equivalent								
	Quart		Half-gallon		Gallon		Other	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents	Cents
	19.2	19.4	16.5	15.7	11.3	11.9	1/	1/
April.....		19.0		15.7		10.3		1/
May.....		18.9		15.7		10.4		1/
June.....								
July.....		19.3		16.1		9.2		1/
August.....		19.4		16.6		9.5		1/
September.....		20.1		15.4		9.4		1/
October.....		19.5		17.2		12.4		1/
November.....		19.4		15.8		10.7		1/
December.....		19.2		17.1		10.8		1/
January.....		19.3		16.7		12.6		1/
February.....		19.1		16.6		10.5		1/
March.....		19.1		15.9		12.5		1/
.....								

1/ Not available.

Table 5.--Fluid whole milk and other fluid milk: Percentage of families buying, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Any fluid milk		Fluid whole milk		Other fluid milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
April.....	81.8	82.6	79.8	81.0	19.4	18.7
May.....		80.9		79.5		18.0
June.....		81.6		80.1		19.4
July.....		81.1		79.8		19.3
August.....		81.9		80.5		19.8
September.....		81.4		80.0		19.2
October.....		82.9		81.4		17.9
November.....		82.7		81.3		18.2
December.....		82.6		81.1		16.7
January.....		81.8		80.2		18.9
February.....		83.2		82.0		18.7
March.....		81.9		80.3		19.6
.....						

Table 6.--Fluid whole milk and other fluid milk: Household purchases per capita in quart equivalent, U. S., 4-week periods

Period	Total		Fluid whole milk		Other fluid milk	
	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55	1956-57	1954-55
	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts	Quarts
April.....	7.11	6.97	6.69	6.62	0.42	0.35
May.....		7.07		6.74		0.34
June.....		6.90		6.54		0.35
July.....		6.65		6.31		0.35
August.....		6.79		6.42		0.37
September.....		7.19		6.80		0.39
October.....		7.31		6.94		0.37
November.....		7.31		6.97		0.34
December.....		7.31		6.98		0.33
.....						
January.....		7.35		7.01		0.34
February.....		7.36		6.99		0.37
March.....		7.34		6.96		0.38
.....						

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